

# Brethren Evangelist

"I Am the Way, the Truth and the Life."—Jesus

VOLUME XXII

ASHLAND, O., THURSDAY, APRIL 26, 1900.

No. 17

## The New York Ecumenical Council for Missions

The most important gathering of modern times is now being held in New York City. It is nothing less than a gathering of the leaders of all the churches and all the missionary boards of all the world to discuss from every side the field, the workers, methods and means for carrying on "the greatest work of the world."

Watch for the report of it as it will mark an era in the history of missions.

The first group of disciples held their little meetings in an upper room in Jerusalem, but only several centuries after the first ecumenical or world-wide council at Nicea brought delegates from all parts of the civilized world and the august emperor of Rome presided over the council.

Only a century ago several students held a meeting by a haystack to talk over the work of missions and the missionary spirit kindled anew after so many centuries of slumbering, has gone thru-out the church of God by the same Spirit which gave power to the word in the early days. And now this first world-wide missionary council is being held and the chief of this mightier new Rome will welcome the gathering, and an ex-president will preside.

The time is ripe for such a council. The rapid march of modern civilization has changed the face of the globe. New problems and new opportunities confront the church in such numbers that only a general council can meet the situation.

What are some of the features of the situation? (1) The expansion of commerce pushing railroads into the dark places of the earth and bringing civilization suddenly to almost every part of it. (2) The placing of native tribes under the dominion of the leading nations. (3) The conflicting interests of these competing nations. (4) The unification of the world by inventions and closer alliance of interests. (5) The growing importance of the sociological features of missions. (6) The overlapping of the different denominations. (7) The coming of the United States into the arena of the world politics, so manifestly providential just at this time. All these and other things call for careful study of the mission field and an intelligent marshalling of Christian workers in strategic places and in strategic ways.

The Brethren church will be represented at the council by J. C. Cassel, and we may expect to hear

from him. May the gathering have our prayers and God's greatest blessing, the guidance of His Spirit.

Ample provision has been made on the program for the presentation of the work of the great Bible Societies of the world. The three largest societies, the British and Foreign, the American, and the Scottish, will all be represented by distinguished speakers. The history of these and kindred societies is one of the marvels of the nineteenth century. The last Annual Report of the American Bible Society notes over seventy Bible Societies who have been engaged in the work of publishing and circulating the Word of God on the earth, but the three above named are by far the largest. The British and Foreign Bible Society, organized in 1804, has circulated 160,000,000 copies of the Bible, or some portions thereof, and the American Bible Society, organized in 1816, has issued about 67,000,000 copies. The total issues of all Bible Societies during the century is not less than 280,000,000 copies, in addition to what has been done by other agencies, which would doubtless reach a total of at least one-half billion copies. The two largest societies have always been in very close and friendly co-operation. Rev. Canon Edmons of Exeter, one of the vice-presidents of the British and Foreign Society, is to speak. The Rev. Dr. Edward W. Gilman, secretary of the American Bible Society, is to make an address. When first organized the American Bible Society found the chief field for its operations in this country, but with the development of Foreign Missions the character of its work has greatly changed; until now more than one-half of its annual issues are distributed in foreign lands and many of them are published there. It maintains about 250 colporteurs and agents in foreign lands, one hundred of them in the Chinese Empire, and the others in Brazil, the Argentine Republic, Bolivia, Uruguay, Paraguay, Venezuela, Colombia, Central America, Mexico, Cuba, Porto Rico, the Turkish Empire, Japan, Korea, Persia, Siam, and most recently in the Philippine Islands. Its present opportunities in China are very great and its circulation during the past year is larger than ever before, reaching in round numbers one-half million copies. Translations or revisions of the Scriptures are being conducted under its auspices in several of the languages of the Chinese Empire. Its work in Latin America is of growing importance, and its various agents and colporteurs not only accompany and co-operate with other